



Top right—"Crown Imperial:" Only 895 town sedans were made in 1941; view of rear blue interior showing courtesy light. Above left: The dash from the passenger side. Left: the straight eight engine displacing 323½ cubic inches. Fluid drive was standard equipment.



Left column from top: The McAtee 1941 Chrysler Town Sedan Crown Imperial in a scene from Colorado; the trunk emblem; a view from the front. The license plate is from the Meadowbrook Concours; looking at the dash. Note the orange emergency brake.

See story starting on page 6.

Featured Car:

The 1941 Chrysler Crown Imperial Town Sedan is certainly a CCCA Full Classic[®]

A one-year only body style In the Crown Imperial Series had luxury features

By Les Jackson

Robert McAtee, an Arizona region member, owns a rare 1941 Chrysler Crown Imperial Town Sedan, Full Classic[®].

He actually bought the car unseen in 1991 based on a *Hemmings Motor News* ad. Robert was living in California at the time and the car was in Connecticut. After a friend checked out the car, Robert bought it and subsequently drove it back to California from the east coast, a distance of nearly 3,800 miles. It was an original car with 43,000 miles.

Subsequently, in 1993, he drove it to Durango where he and his partner opened the Grand Motorcar and Piano Collection museum, where the car resided, until the museum was closed when Robert, his partner and the car came to Phoenix. Robert now considers himself semi-retired.

Their Phoenix house had a regular two car garage and they added garage space for nine additional cars.

The car performed well on its trips. It now has more than 60,000 miles on the odometer.

The town sedan's doors are all hinged at the back,

whereas the other Crown Imperials of 1941 had the back doors hinged at the front (so-called suicide doors.) It is thought that the town sedan was intended to compete with the Cadillac Sixty Special and the Packard Super 8. Only 894 of the Chrysler Crown Imperial town sedans were made.

Ray Dietrich is believed to have a major role in the design on the car, perhaps the last Chrysler car he was involved with.

Some of the standard features of the car are the four speed vacuumatic fluid drive transmission, electrically operated windows in front and back, front and rear carpeting, safety step lights, assist straps, rear compartment reading lights, handbrake warning light, front and rear heating, air-foam cushions, and rear fender "shields" (we now call them skirts). Options available included running boards, divider window and air conditioning.

Robert reports that the steering is quite easy and somewhat lighter than a 1948 New Yorker or a 1950 Town & Country that were also in his museum.

It has a 323.5 cubic inch straight eight engine with "plenty of torque" for the mountains of Colorado. The 3.29 differential ratio is low enough for easy highway driving, and the chair high seating is very comfortable on long drives.

Chrysler explained the Fluid Drive by saying it replaced the flywheel. "Power transmitted through fluid in coupling, no



The 1941 Chrysler Crown Imperial sales catalog shows a woman's gloved hand adjusting the front electric windows with a switch on the dash.



Robert McAtee with his 1941 Crown Imperial Town Sedan.

mechanical hook-up between engine and clutch. No clutch pedal action or gear shifting necessary for 99% of normal car driving.” Horsepower by the straight eight cylinder engine was 137 to 143 at 3400 rpm depending on whether high compression cylinder head is used. The bore is 3¼” and stroke 4 7/8”. Displacement 323½ cubic inches. Six bearing camshaft. Steering ratio: 20.4 to 1. Tires: 7.50 x 15. Twenty gallon fuel tank.



Is it a Full Classic[®] or is it not clear in the CCCA Handbook?

As we were preparing the article on Robert McAtee's 1941 Chrysler Crown Imperial town sedan, we double checked the CCCA *Handbook* listing of Full Classics[®]. It says in part "Chrysler...1940-1948 Crown Imperial – includes series...C-33...." Also listed were C-models for years other than 1941. The only 1941 series listed was the C-33.

Further research showed that the McAtee car is a Crown Imperial C-30, not a C-33.

We decided to ask the authority, Bob Joynt, chair of the CCCA classification committee.

His response: "The 1941 Chrysler C-30 Crown Imperial Town Sedan is definitely a Full Classic and was recognized as such by the CCCA approximately 20 years ago. At that time, we brought into the Club all of the 1937-1948 Custom and Crown Imperials...." He then explained a recent action by the Committee reaf-

firming this with respect to a specific car. He continued "...we felt the directory listing of Full Classic Chryslers was not clear on this model". He added: "I look forward to reading the article...as these cars are real rare beauties."

Many other companies that use numbers as well as names to designate a series are consistent with their usage, such as 1936-1942 Buick Series 90 are all called Limited. Chrysler in 1941, however, used the "C-number" designation to relate the engine and wheelbase, not the trim line. Thus the McAtee car has a 127½" wheelbase whereas the C-33 Crown Imperials have 145½" wheelbases. The 127½" wheelbase and C-30 designation is shared with the 1941 Chrysler New Yorker and Saratoga series which are non-classic.